

Frequently Asked Questions on Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax

Q. What is Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax and why do I have to pay it?

- A. Under Massachusetts Law, every motor vehicle *registered* in the Commonwealth is subject to Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax *every year* unless the vehicle is expressly exempted from paying this tax by law. Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax is assessed, under Massachusetts Law, for *the privilege of registering a Motor Vehicle or Trailer in Massachusetts*. Obtaining a registration and license plates from the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles automatically triggers the annual assessment of Excise Tax.

Q. What are my Excise Tax dollars used for?

- A. Excise Tax revenues are collected by the town and are considered a “general fund receipt” which means that these funds are not “earmarked” for any specific use. These funds are used by the town in the same manner as property taxes and any other “general fund receipt” which means that they contribute towards almost every service the town provides, such as: Police & Fire Protection; Public Education; Building and Maintenance of Public Schools, Buildings and Roadways; Elderly Services; Library Services; and many other municipal services which are, otherwise, provided by the town at no charge to residents.

Q. What was the tax I paid when I bought my vehicle?

- A. Motor Vehicles, like most other purchases in Massachusetts, are subject to the Commonwealth’s Sales Tax. Sales Tax is a different tax from Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax. Sales Tax Revenues are paid directly to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and are used to contribute to the services and programs provided by the Commonwealth. The town does not receive sales tax revenues, and hence, sales taxes do not directly contribute to the services provided by the town.

Q. How often should I expect to receive an Excise Tax bill from the town?

- A. You should expect to receive one (1) Excise Tax bill relative to each calendar year during which the vehicle is registered. If the vehicle was not registered for the entire year, then the Excise Tax will be pro-rated according to the number of months during which the vehicle was registered. It is important to note that, under Massachusetts Law, pro-ration of the Excise Tax is only allowed on a per month basis.

Q. How is the amount of my Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax determined?

- A. The amount of the Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax on any particular vehicle or trailer is calculated by multiplying the discounted value* of the vehicle by the Excise Tax Rate of \$25.00 per \$1,000 in discounted value. The \$25.00 Excise Tax Rate applies to all communities in Massachusetts and was established by the State Legislature several years ago.

- The Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax itself is determined as follows:

\$25.00 / \$1,000 or 0.025	x	Discounted Value*	=	Excise Tax
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- It is important to note that, under Massachusetts Law, the minimum Excise Tax is \$5.00 which means that if the above calculation of the Excise Tax results in an amount less than \$5.00 then your Excise Tax will be assessed as \$5.00
- The discounted value* of your vehicle is determined by multiplying the Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) of your vehicle, when it was originally sold by the manufacturer, by the applicable discount rate according to the following table:

If the Tax Year is:	The Discounted Value* is determined as follows:		
Preceding the Model Year:	0.50	MSRP	Discounted Value*
	x	=	
Same as Model Year:	0.90	MSRP	Discounted Value*
	x	=	
1 year after Model Year:	0.60	MSRP	Discounted Value*
	x	=	
2 years after Model Year:	0.40	MSRP	Discounted Value*
	x	=	
3 years after Model Year:	0.25	MSRP	Discounted Value*
	x	=	
More than 3 years after Model Year:	0.10	MSRP	Discounted Value*
	x	=	

Q. What do I do if I receive an Excise Tax bill from Wilmington, but I am no longer living in the Town of Wilmington?

- A. Under certain circumstances you may still be required to pay the Excise Tax to the Town of Wilmington. If you do not live in Wilmington when you receive the bill, but you did live in the Town of Wilmington either on January 1st of the tax year, or when you registered the vehicle or trailer, you should still pay the Excise Tax to Wilmington. You should then contact the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicle to change *both your mailing address and the city or town in which your vehicle is principally garaged*. Both of these items need to be changed with the Mass. RMV in order for your new community to issue an Excise Tax bill to you rather than Wilmington. There is a link to the Mass. RMV at the bottom of this page.

In any case, if you receive an Excise Tax Bill from the Town of Wilmington *please pay the bill before the due date*. Once you have paid the Excise Tax, if you are entitled to an abatement of the tax, you will be issued a refund. Do not allow the Excise Tax Due Date to pass without taking action to ensure that your obligation to the town is satisfied.

Q. What do I do if I feel my Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise amount is incorrect?

A. You may file for an abatement of your tax with the Board of Assessors. If you contact the Board of Assessors at (978) 658-3675, the Assessors' staff will be able to assist you with any questions you may have relative to completing the appropriate forms to file for abatement. However, please remember that filing for abatement of your tax does not stay any collection activity. You should pay your Excise Tax as you were billed and if you are granted an abatement from the Board of Assessors, you will receive a credit to your tax bill and, if applicable, a refund.

Q. What is the penalty for not paying my Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax?

A. If your Excise Tax is not cleared by the due date, interest at a rate of 12% per annum will be added to the Excise Tax along with a series of fees.

Q. What happens if I do not pay my Excise Tax?

A. If your Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax obligation is not satisfied, either through making payment or receiving an abatement, the bill will be referred to the town's Deputy Tax Collector for further collection activity which includes being issued and served with a "Warrant to Collect" your Excise Tax and being "Marked" at the Mass. Registry of Motor Vehicles for non-renewal of your Driver's License and Vehicle or Trailer Registration. It is also important to note that several other states have mutual agreements with the Commonwealth to detain or impound "Marked" vehicles found in other states when there is an outstanding Excise Tax. Also, your vehicle may be impounded in Massachusetts if you are unable to renew your Driver's License and Vehicle or Trailer registration due to an unpaid Excise Tax.

Q. What if I am unable to pay my Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax Bill?

A. If you are unable to pay your Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax, please contact the Collector's Office as soon as possible. While we are unable to eliminate the Excise Tax, we are here to help in any way we can and are able to listen to your situation and offer possible solutions. Remember, if you find yourself in this type of situation, the sooner you contact us, the better able we are to offer guidance.

Do you have another question not answered???
You may either email the question directly to the Treasurer/Collector at
treasurer@town.wilmington.ma.us
or call the Treasurer/Collector's Office at (978) 658-3531
TDD (hearing impaired) 978-6941417
We will be glad to assist you in any way we can.
Thank you.

For more information please refer to the following

Click here for [Assessor](#)
Click here for [Registry of Motor Vehicles](#)